

99 apply for job as secretary of works

NINETY-nine candidates had applied for the post of Secretary of Works when the 20-day application period for the position closed yesterday.

Response from overseas was particularly good.

Recruiter David Crothers, whose consultancy assists the government in recruiting executive staff, said he was pleased with the response.

Despite strong internal opposition from the Civil Service, the Government departed from normal practice and advertised the post in the international and local press in the first week in February.

Vacant posts are normally filled by internal promotion.

Mr Crothers said he received 49 applications from Britain and 30 from Australia. The Public Service Commission received 20 applications from Hongkong, the United States and Canada.

Preliminary interviews

will start next week and Mr Crothers said a shortlist of suitable candidates would be prepared by next month.

The ideal candidate will replace existing Secretary of Works Kenneth Kwok when he retires in August.

The Secretary for the Public Service Commission, Wan Suet-ming, yesterday refused to say how many applications had come from the Civil Service.

"At this stage, all information concerning the applicants is confidential," he said.

An internal circular issued at the beginning of this month invited Government engineers of D5 grade or above to apply for the post.

There are five directors at this level. They are the Water Supplies Director Wong Kwok-lai, Electrical and Mechanical Services Director Miao Chi, Highways Director Kwei See-kan, Territory Development Director Dr Nip Kam-fan and Civil Engin-

earing Services Director Dr Edward Brand.

The Government Local Civil Engineers Association sent letters to muster support for four of them.

It is known that Dr Nip and Mr Wong told the association that they would apply for the job.

Dr Brand is the only expatriate who did not receive support from his association.

Dr Brand did not say whether he had applied for the post yesterday, but he did say: "I think all self-respecting people at the required level would apply for the post."

Some insiders said the administration favoured Dr Brand over the other four candidates.

"I have not heard of that saying," Dr Brand said.

Mr Crothers was confident of finding a suitable candidate before the post is left vacant by Mr Kwok in August.